

ARTHUR HOPPE

Shirley's Secret Weapon Saves All

No political commentator has yet come up with an adequate explanation of the Russians' erratic behavior since they stormed into Czechoslovakia, quickly capturing Prague, Bratislava and Shirley Temple.

First they looked tough, then they looked sheepish and for the past few weeks they've merely looked bewildered.

The answer would seem obvious to anyone who wept over "Little Miss Marker," "Little Miss Broadway" or "The Littlest Rebel." It's obvious to me and my friend, Mark Hawkins, the noted political commentator. In fact, we're working on a movie scenario entitled, "Little Miss America."

Open on a scene in the Kremlin. The General (played by Akim Tamiroff) is receiving his orders from The Commissars.

The General: Invade Czechoslovakia? But why, Comrades? What is this treasure they have that we must capture — this treasure that will bring the American imperialists to their knees?

The Head Commissar (smiling cruelly): Little Miss America!

The General (elated): The very symbol of Americanism! The one thing all Americans over 40 cherish. I see it now. We capture her, force her to extol communism and thereby destroy their will to resist. I shall order my tanks to roll at once. Here are my plans . . .

The Head Commissar (nervously): The CIA may be listening. Speak Russian.

(Fade to montage of rumbling tanks, blasting artillery and diving bombers. Cut to square outside a hotel. Ringed by Soviet tanks and bayoneted soldiers, bravely stands Little Miss America — played by Shirley Temple. The General strides forward.)

The General: Aha! Victory is ours!

Shirley (kicking him in the shin before being restrained by a brutal soldier): I think you're mean, squashing a nice little country.

The General: What's one squashed country when we shall win the world? Now repeat after me, "Hooray for the Revolution! All power to the Soviets!"

Shirley (thrusting forth her chin): Never! And you better let me go 'cause Ronnie and George are signing up a Shirley Temple Brigade to come free me and John Wayne's going to lead it himself. So there.

The General (blanching): John Wayne! But no, he wouldn't dare, not while I have you in my tender mercies.

Shirley (pouting prettily): Golly whillikers, I guess I've got to use my Secret Weapon then.

(A single tear courses down her cheek. At the sight of it, the General begins to sob, the soldiers lower their bayonets and scuff their toes and the guns on the tanks droop to the ground.)

Cut to Shirley, marching across the border to freedom, carrying an American flag, to be met by a CIA agent played by Bojangles Robinson.

Well, the rest of the scenario can be told briefly: Shirley goes home to a boffo lecture tour. The General, clutching her picture to his lips, loses at Russian roulette. And the Soviets, now all good guys, free Party Secretary Dubcek, kick out a lot of Czech Stalinists and are only sticking around Prague to see if they can't somehow make amends.

So it's a great scenario and a great explanation. But so far, no one will buy it. And that's odd when you consider the ones they do.

P-Hoppe, Arthur
Temple, Shirley
CIA 4-Czechoslovakia
SOC. 4.01.4 Little Miss
America